INFESTED: THE ROAD TO SPIDER ISLAND

the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN®

662

GAGE
SLOTT
BROWN
OLAZABA
RAUCH

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The Substitute PART TWO

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HATE!
GUYS, PSYCHO-MAN'S MAKING YOU FEEL THIS WAY! YOU HAVE TO FIGHT IT!
SPIDER-MAN
REPTIL
STRIKER
FINESSE
VEIL
METTLE
HAZMAT
PSYCHO-MAN
SURE, THAT'S ALL. A BUNCH OF HORMONE-ADDLED SUPER-POWERED TEENAGERS--WHO WERE SO HORRIBLY TORTURED BY NORMAN OSBORN THAT THE AVENGERS ARE DESPERATELY TRYING TO KEEP THEM FROM TURNING INTO VILLAINS--JUST HAVE TO CONTROL THEIR EMOTIONS.
I AM SO DEAD.

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YOU'RE JEALOUS OF ME! YOU WANT ME DEAD! BUT I'LL KILL YOU FIRST!

SHZAAM

OKAY, TIME TO SHAKE OFF THE LINGERING EFFECTS OF THE DOUBT PSYCHO-MAN PARALYZED ME WITH.

I AGREED TO TEACH THESE *AVENGERS ACADEMY* KIDS.

THEY'RE MY *RESPONSIBILITY.*

Y'KNOW, THERE ARE TIMES I WISH UNCLE BEN HAD TOLD ME THAT WITH GREAT POWER COMES *PIE...*

MY COMPLIMENTS ON OVERCOMING MY MANIPULATIONS, SPIDER-MAN. CLEARLY YOU HAVE EXPERIENCE IN SUCH MATTERS.

AND CLEARLY THESE *CHILDREN* DO NOT. THE HATE CONSUMES THEM. UNLESS YOU KILL THEM, THEY WILL KILL *YOU.*

REGARDLESS, I TRIUMPH.

OKAY, GOT TO PRIORITIZE. PUT THE DEADLIEST OUT OF ACTION FIRST. WHO'S THE MOST--

OH, NO...

I HATE BEING TRAPPED IN THIS SUIT. HATE IT HATE IT **HATE IT!**

I DON'T CARE IF I FRY YOU ALL!

I WANT OUT!

THWIP

THWIP

THWIP

AH-AH. VIOLATIONS OF THE DRESS CODE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

GET OFF! I'LL BURN YOU OFF!

YOU KIDS TODAY. ALWAYS SHOWING TOO MUCH SKIN. YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY: "IF YOU LOOK LIKE TRASH, PEOPLE WILL TREAT YOU...

...ACCORDINGLY."

SORRY. BUT HAVING BEEN THROWN INTO A DUMPSTER OR TWO IN MY DAY, TRUST ME: THIS IS A TOP-OF-THE-LINE MODEL.

OKAY, BETWEEN THE METAL AND HAZMAT'S SUIT, THAT SHOULD BE ENOUGH SHIELDING TO AVOID A MINI-MELTDOWN.

WHO'S THE NEXT BIGGEST THREAT? MAN, I NEVER REALIZED HOW MUCH I DEPENDED ON MY SPIDER-SENSE UNTIL I LOST--

GUHH!

WHAM

THIS METTLE HITS...HARD. BUT I CAN DODGE... IF I CAN JUST GET A SECOND TO--

WHUD

--BREATHE...

HRRRR...

MAN, I'M GONNA TELL THE AVENGERS TO EXPEL ALL THESE DELINQUENTS.

RRRAAGGHH!

KLUNG

TWAK

INTOLERABLE!

SSSPIDER-MAN...

REPTIL? YOU'RE DOING GREAT! FIGHT IT!

DINOSAUR FORM...BRAIN CHEMISTRY'S... DIFFERENT... HARDER FOR HIM... TO CONTROL... BUT CAN'T... LAST LONG...

GET... AWAY! THIS WAS ALWAYS GOING TO HAPPEN.

WE'RE... MESSED UP. BROKEN. FORGET US. GET HELP. TELL THE OTHERS... THE POLICE...

KILL US. IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO STOP US. AND IT'S OKAY. BETTER...FOR EVERY--

NNNNAAARRGH!

THWIP

ANY OF YOU.

I'M NOT GIVING UP ON YOU.

SORRY, REPTIL. NOT GONNA HAPPEN.

THERE'VE BEEN PLENTY OF TIMES I WANTED TO GIVE UP ON *MYSELF*. WHEN JUST ABOUT EVERYBODY WROTE ME OFF.

BUT THERE WAS ALWAYS SOMEONE WHO *DIDN'T*. SOME OF THOSE PEOPLE ARE STILL AROUND... AND SOME *AREN'T*.

THEY *BELIEVED* IN ME. AND THERE'S *NO WAY* I'D LET THEM DOWN.

KZAFF

I BELIEVE IN *YOU*.

AND THIS *FOOT!*

FWAMM

I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT. THINGS NOBODY SHOULD HAVE TO FACE.

BUT I'LL SHOW YOU THERE'S *ALWAYS* A BETTER WAY.

AND I'LL SHOW YOU THE USERS GET THEIRS IN THE END.

SUCH CHARMING NAIVETE.

=K-HOFF= =KOFF=

WHAT YOU FAIL TO SEE IS THAT WITH DISAPPOINTING CREATURES LIKE YOURSELVES, THE PATHS TO VICTORY ARE MANY AND VARIED.

SO SURE OF YOUR OWN SELF-IMPORTANCE.

HOWEVER, *YOU* NEED NOT DIE. *THEY* NEED NOT DIE.

FOR ME TO WIN--TO DESTROY YOU UTTERLY--ALL THAT IS REQUIRED...

...IS THAT *SOMEONE* DIE.

SNAP!

OH, NO...

DUDE, IT'S THOSE AVENGERS ACADEMY KIDS!

HEY, FINESSE, CAN I HAVE YOUR AUTOGRAPH?

MOMMY, LOOK!

OH, REPTIL, MY LITTLE BOY *ADORES* YOU. COULD WE GET A PICTURE?

OR MAYBE THIS IS A BAD TIME...?

HHRRRRR

JEEZ, YOU NEW YORKERS ARE JADED.

RUN! ALL OF YOU!

RRRRRARRR

RUN!!

GOTTA KEEP 'EM AWAY FROM CIVILIANS... EVEN IF IT MEANS USING UP JUST ABOUT ALL OF MY WEB-FLUID.

IF THEY KILL INNOCENT PEOPLE... EVEN *HURT* ANYONE...THEY'LL THINK NORMAN WAS RIGHT ABOUT THEM. THAT THEY ARE LIKE HIM.

MY PAL--AND FORMER WOULD-BE WORLD CONQUEROR *NORMAN OSBORN* GOT TO THESE KIDS FIRST, TORTURED THEM TO MAKE THEM LIKE *HIM*.

THEIR LIVES'LL BE *OVER*.

AND THERE'S *NO WAY* I'M LETTING THAT HAPPEN.

EVEN IF IT *KILLS* ME.

WHICH IS LOOKING LIKE A DEFINITE POSSIBILITY.

REPTIL, LISTEN TO ME. DON'T LET HIM DO THIS TO YOU. YOU REGAINED CONTROL BEFORE, YOU CAN DO IT AGAIN.

OUT OF WEBBING... TOO FRIED TO SHAKE HIM OFF...THIS IS BAD...

YOUR NAME IS *HUMBERTO LOPEZ.*

YOU'RE AN *AVENGER.*

NO USE. THE MORE I FIGHT HIM, THE MORE SAVAGE HE GETS.

AND IF I *STOP* FIGHTING...

...WELL, I GUESS WE'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT.

REPTIL, LISTEN TO ME...I'M GONNA TAKE A CHANCE NOW, AND IT MIGHT END REALLY BADLY. BUT I'M KINDA OUT OF OPTIONS.

SO THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER:

RRRRRRR--

YOU'RE A GOOD KID. A *HERO.*

I DON'T BLAME YOU.

DON'T BLAME YOURSELF.

...RRRREPTIL.

I'M REPTIL.

I'M ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS.

THAT'S RIGHT, KID.

YOU SURE ARE.

KRAK ON

I KNEW YOU'D TAKE HIS SIDE, REPTIL. YOU'RE SUCH A *SUCK-UP.*

YOU *AVENGERS* ALREADY DECIDED WHAT WE ARE. THAT WE'RE *CRIMINALS.*

THEN THAT'S WHAT WE'LL BE!

NEVER THOUGHT I'D SYMPATHIZE WITH THE *TEACHERS* IN JOHN HUGHES MOVIES...

I SEE WHAT YOU'RE DOING! YOU THINK YOU'LL PUT THAT ONLINE? MAKE ME LOOK BAD?

I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT *HYDROGEN CHLORIDE* DOES TO YOUR CAMERA... AND YOUR *FACE...*

VEIL! *STOP!* YOU CAN BEAT THIS!

DON'T CONDESCEND TO ME! YOU THINK I'M STUPID? YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU ALL SAY ABOUT ME?

LISTEN. REMEMBER WHAT OSBORN DID TO US? HOW WE SWORE WE'D NEVER LET ANYONE FORCE US TO DO ANYTHING EVER AGAIN?

THAT'S WHAT *PSYCHO-MAN'S* DOING. UNLESS YOU GET *CONTROL* OF YOURSELF.

REPTIL! GET AWAY FROM HER! I CAN'T REACH YOU!

YOU CAN...*DO* IT, MADDY.

I... KNOW YOU... CAN...

KOFF!

HKK...

NNNNN...

...NNNNNO!

I'M...SORRY, SPIDER-MAN. IT'S LIKE HE TAKES WHAT'S INSIDE YOU AND PULLS IT TO THE FRONT...THIS FEAR AND PAIN AND HATE THAT'S SO...SO *DEEP*...

I KNOW. I'VE BEEN THERE. AND I KNOW HOW HARD IT IS TO DO WHAT YOU JUST DID.

BUT YOU *DID* IT. CAN YOU KNOCK THE OTHERS OUT? SLEEP GAS OR SOMETHING?

I CAN DO BETTER.

WE DON'T HAVE A LOT IN COMMON, THE SIX OF US. BUT ONE THING WE DO HAVE IS THAT WE DON'T LIKE BEING CONTROLLED.

BECAUSE WE ALL *WERE*. BY OSBORN...

...BY OUR PARENTS...

...BY OUR OWN *BODIES*.

AND WE *REALLY* HATE IT.

SMELL IS ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS WE HAVE.

ALL IT TAKES IS A CERTAIN ODOR... THE ANTISEPTIC SMELL OF OSBORN'S LAB, OR THE COLOGNE SOMEONE WHO HURT US WORE...

...AND WE REMEMBER.

WE *FIGHT.*

TO MAKE SURE *NO ONE EVER DOES IT AGAIN.*

FASCINATING.

SNF YOU KIDS MAKE ME SO PROUD.

KZZ WHAM

NOW DID EVERYONE TURN IN THEIR VILLAIN-SMASHING PERMISSION SLIPS?

TO BREAK FREE OF MY CONTROL... I WAS MORE CORRECT THAN I KNEW, SPIDER-MAN. THIS BATTLE WAS UNNECESSARY.

YOU WERE DEFEATED BEFORE IT BEGAN.

KRUNCH

OBSERVE THE *SAVAGERY* WITH WHICH THE CHILDREN FIGHT. THE *ABANDON*. THEY DO NOT HAVE THE DISCIPLINE OF MIND TO RESIST ME. YET THEY DID.

THERE IS BUT *ONE* CONCLUSION.

THE *HATE*... THE *FEAR*...THE *DOUBT* THEY CARRY WITHIN THEM EACH DAY IS GREATER THAN ANY I COULD LAY UPON THEM.

YOU HAVE *ALREADY FAILED.* AND IT IS FAR MORE SATISFYING TO LEAVE YOU ALIVE...

TO SEE THOSE YOU TRIED TO SAVE... IRRETRIEVABLY LOST.

DUDE WAS A *ROBOT?*

NO, HE...THE REAL PSYCHO-MAN'S TINY. MICROSCOPIC. AS SOON AS WE TORE OPEN HIS SUIT, HE STARTED SHRINKING BACK DOWN TO THE MICROVERSE.

DOESN'T PYM TEACH YOU ANYTHING?

"IRRETREIVABLY LOST?"

WHAT WAS ALL THAT SMACK HE WAS TALKING?

...

COME ON, SPIDEY. PSYCHO-MAN WAS JUST TRYING TO GET A ZINGER IN BEFORE HE RAN AWAY. IT'S *NOT* TOO LATE FOR THESE KIDS. I WON'T BELIEVE THAT.

I MEAN... *I* BROKE FREE OF HIS SPELL TOO...

IT WAS NOTHING. JUST TRYING TO MESS WITH OUR HEADS, LIKE HE ALWAYS DOES.

WE GOT A WIN, GUYS.

LET'S TAKE IT AND GO HOME.

TONIGHT WE CELEBRATE WITH ICE CREAM!

THAT IS IF ANY OF YOUR PARENTS GAVE YOU LUNCH MONEY

I... DON'T HAVE POCKETS.

Infinite Avengers Mansion.
Avengers Academy Headquarters.

FLOATING IN UNDERSPACE, THE DIMENSION BELOW THE MICROVERSE.

PSYCHO-MAN... OF COURSE.

Giant-Man.
AVENGERS ACADEMY HEADMASTER.

I KNEW THAT SUBATOMIC MONSTER WE FOUGHT YESTERDAY WAS ARTIFICIALLY ENLARGED INTO OUR DIMENSION. I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED.

WAS ANYONE SERIOUSLY HURT?

WHICH IS A FANCY WAY OF SAYING "SCIENCE BASEMENT." -ED

OUR SUBSTITUTE TEACHER KICKED ME IN THE *FACE*.

AND THREW ME IN A *TRASH BIN*. WITH *SALMONELLA* AND *BOTULISM* AND WHO KNOWS WHAT ELSE.

UH...RAT FECES?

OKAY, THAT PROBABLY WASN'T HELPFUL.

UGH.

OKAY, DR. PYM, YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY ANYTHING. I KNOW.

AS SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS GO, I WAS A *DISASTER*.

I, UH, SCRATCHED SPIDER-MAN UP PRETTY BAD.

HEY, NO WORRIES, REPTIL. I HEAL QUICK.

AND HAVE YOU SEEN HOW MANY SPARE COSTUMES I HAVE THESE DAYS?

I PUT YOU IN DANGER. I FAILED TO PROTECT YOU. I TOOK YOU INTO THE FIELD AGAINST AN ENEMY YOU HAD NO BUSINESS GOING UP AGAINST. AND I DIDN'T TEACH YOU A *THING*.

I'M *SORRY*.

AND PYM, I OWE YOU AN APOLOGY TOO. I'M NOT SUITED FOR THIS. I MAY HAVE BEEN A DECENT TEACHER IN MY CIVILIAN IDENTITY, BUT...

...WELL, LET'S FACE IT. SPIDER-MAN SETTING AN EXAMPLE FOR ANYONE...

LET'S TAKE ME OFF THE TEACHERS' LIST AND NEVER MENTION IT AGAIN, OKAY?

ARE YOU *NUTS?*

THAT WAS THE BEST DAY OF SCHOOL.

EVER!

SERIOUSLY! I THREW OFF *MIND CONTROL!* I DIDN'T KNOW I COULD DO THAT!

YEAH... AND MY JAW DOESN'T HURT *THAT* MUCH.

THOUGH I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO SUE IF I DISCOVER ANY LONG-TERM INJURY LATER.

OH, MY GOD, THEY'RE STILL MIND CONTROLLED.

I HAVE TROUBLE WITH HUMOR. BUT SPEAKING FOR MYSELF, I DID LEARN SOME VALUABLE LESSONS. AND PICKED UP SEVERAL USEFUL MOVES FROM YOU.

I GUESS THE DUMPSTER WASN'T THAT BAD. BETTER THAN FLASH-FRYING A BUNCH OF PEDESTRIANS...

MARGINALLY.

DR. PYM... SPIDER-MAN WAS *GREAT*. HE DIDN'T TREAT US LIKE KIDS, OR BOMBS THAT COULD GO OFF ANY MINUTE, OR THESE FRAGILE THINGS YOU HAVE TO WALK ON EGGSHELLS AROUND.

HE TREATED US LIKE *PEOPLE*. PEOPLE WHO CAN GO OUT IN THE FIELD... AND WHO CAN TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR ACTIONS.

HE TREATED US LIKE *HEROES*.

YOU GOT ME. I'M REALLY GREAT.

AND WHEN THINGS WENT BAD, HE WOULD HAVE SACRIFICED HIS OWN *LIFE* TO MAKE SURE WE DIDN'T HURT ANYONE.

BUT THROUGH IT ALL, HE NEVER STOPPED *BELIEVING* IN US. THAT WE COULD BREAK *FREE* OF PSYCHO-MAN'S INFLUENCE. THAT WE WERE *GOOD ENOUGH*.

BECAUSE OF THAT, WE *WERE*.

WE'VE ALL HEARD IT BEFORE: "*WITH GREAT POWER COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY*." YOU TEACHERS TOSS IT AROUND LIKE IT'S SOME KIND OF *CATCHPHRASE*.

TODAY WE LEARNED WHAT IT *MEANS*.

WOW. I... I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY. I FEEL LIKE ROBIN WILLIAMS IN "*DEAD POETS SOCIETY.*"

BETTER, ACTUALLY. I ONLY ***ALMOST*** GOT YOU KILLED.

THANKS, GUYS. JUST... THANKS.

FANTASTIC! PRECISELY WHAT I WAS HOPING FOR.

I'LL TELL YOU WHAT... WE CAN MAKE SPIDEY'S VISTS TO THE ACADEMY A REGULAR THING...

NO!

Class Dismissed!

NEXT! Anti-Venom... and the Ghost of Jean DeWolff!

INFESTED Stage 3: GREAT RESPONSIBILTY

BY SLOTT/RIOS/RODRIGUEZ/DELGADO/VC'S JC

MY NAME'S WALTER COLEMAN. THIRTY-EIGHT-YEAR-OLD GUY WITH A WIFE, A KID, AND A MORTGAGE.

YOU'D PROBABLY LOOK AT ME AND THINK, "HE'S NOTHING SPECIAL."

HOLD ON!

KRSH

NOW DON'T ASK ME HOW, BUT A COUPLE DAYS AGO, I WOKE UP WITH ***SUPER-POWERS.*** Y'KNOW, LIKE ONE OF THE AVENGERS.

DON'T WORRY. I'LL GET US OUT OF HERE.

STRONG AS CAPTAIN AMERICA-- AND ABLE TO JUMP AROUND LIKE SPIDER-MAN.

I'VE GOT YOU, DARLING.

DADDY...

I PROMISE!

RRFF!

HERE WE GO!

WALTER!

IT'S JUST A HOUSE, ANNIE. EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE OKAY.

KRAKK

NEXT STOP, FIRST AVENUE!

QUICK-- HOSE 'EM DOWN.

EVERYBODY OFF.

THANKS, SPIDER-MAN!

BLESS YOU!

ALL PART OF THE FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICE.

GOOD WORK, SON. DON'T THINK WE WOULD'A REACHED 'EM IN TIME.

JUST DOING WHAT I CAN, CHIEF.

I KNOW. BUT WITH MULTIPLE FIRES TONIGHT, IT'S JUST A SHAME...

"...YOU CAN'T BE IN TWO PLACES AT ONCE."

EVERYONE, KEEP CLEAR. LET US DO OUR JOBS.

THEY PULLED ANOTHER BODY?

YEAH, IF ONLY WE GOT HERE SOONER...

FIRE LINE DO NOT CROSS

FIRE LINE DO NOT CROSS

MY GOD, WALTER. THE HARTMANS NEXT DOOR. ALICE AND JOSH--

SHH. THERE'S NOTHING WE COULD'VE DONE.

I'M NOT A SUPER HERO. I'M A FATHER. AND A HUSBAND.

I CAN'T GO RISKING MY NECK. NOT WHEN I'VE GOT A FAMILY WHO DEPENDS ON ME.

THEY'RE MY RESPONSIBILITY.

End

INTRODUCING:
MAGNETIC MAN
IN
THE CHOICE

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BEWARE, CITIZENS...

THE MENACING MAGNETIC MAN HAS RETURNED!

PFFT.

YEAH, RIGHT.

BIG-CITY BANK

LANE AHEAD

GEEZ.

HAS IT REALLY COME TO THIS...?

YEAH, SURE, WHEN I FIRST CREATED THOSE MAGNETIC GLOVES, THIS MAGNETIC MAN GIG WAS A BLAST.

SECURITY

ALL THEM BANKS? COME ON. CLEARLY NO MATCH FOR A GUY WITH MAGNETIC POWERS.

LIKE CANDY FROM A BABY, IT WAS.

KEY WORD THERE, THOUGH, IS "WAS".

BECAUSE IT SEEMED LIKE NO TIME AT ALL BEFORE SPIDER-MAN SHOWED UP...

...AND SHOWED YOU WHY NO MATTER HOW GOOD YOU THINK YOU ARE, THERE'S ALWAYS SOMEBODY BETTER.

MUCH BETTER, IF I'M BEING HONEST ABOUT IT.

THAT LITTLE LESSON GOT ME 6 YEARS IN THE CLINK FOR MY TROUBLES.

WHICH ACTUALLY WASN'T THE WORST PART.

19700

I MEAN...SURE, IT'S JAIL. IT SUCKS. BUT I KEPT MY HEAD DOWN, DIDN'T GAMBLE, DIDN'T BORROW ANY MONEY... I REALLY DIDN'T HAVE MUCH TROUBLE IN THE JOINT, ACTUALLY.

SO NO, FOR ME THE WORST PART WASN'T GOING *IN*...

IT WAS COMING *OUT*.

FOR ONE THING, YOU QUICKLY REALIZE BEING AWAY 6 YEARS IS LONGER THAN YOU THINK.

YOU COME OUT AND EVERYTHING YOU THOUGHT YOU KNEW--YOUR FRIENDS, YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD, TECHNOLOGY, ***EVERYTHING***--IT'S ALL MOVED ON WITHOUT YOU.

AND THAT'S NOT EVEN INCLUDING YOUR FAMILY...

LIKE THAT LITTLE GIRL WHO WAS A BABY WHEN YOU FIRST WENT INSIDE? WELL, SHE'S NOT A BABY ANYMORE.

AND NOW YOU'RE A STRANGER TO HER. TO YOUR OWN DAUGHTER. TO YOUR OWN LIFE.

YEAH...AND WHAT KIND OF LIFE IS IT EXACTLY?

NO ONE TRUSTS YOU. YOU CAN FORGET ABOUT GETTING ANY KIND OF REASONABLE JOB, NO MATTER WHAT THE LEGAL SYSTEM WOULD HAVE YOU BELIEVE.

EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION FORM

IT'S ALL A GIANT CROCK.

THEY WANT YOU TO THINK YOU PAY YOUR DEBT TO SOCIETY AND THAT'S THAT. THAT YOU'RE FREE TO LIVE YOUR LIFE LIKE ANY OTHER CITIZEN.

BILLS PILE UP. FIGHTS WITH YOUR WIFE BECOME THE NORM.

YOU GET TO A POINT WHERE IT'S EVERYTHING YOU CAN DO TO KEEP YOURSELF FROM SWALLOWING A GUN.

SO BEFORE YOU END UP DOING THAT...

...YOU END UP BACK HERE. BACK TO DOING WHAT GOT YOU INTO THIS WHOLE DAMNED MESS IN THE FIRST PLACE.

LANE AHEAD

OH, WELL. MIGHT AS WELL GET THIS THING STARTED.

VRRRRRR!

MAN, I REALLY DON'T WANT TO DO THIS...

THEN DON'T.

STOP

BUDDY... YOU'RE DAMNED LUCKY I JUST DIDN'T TAKE YOUR HEAD OFF. THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE

SOMEBODY ELSE.

HEY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ME, DUDE. I'M NOBODY. JUST SOME GUY PASSING BY ON MY WAY HOME.

WELL, THEN KEEP ON PASSING BY BEFORE YOU GET HURT.

SEE, THAT'S THE THING...I GET THE FEELING YOU *DON'T* WANT TO HURT ME ANY MORE THAN YOU WANT TO ROB THAT BANK.

MAYBE SO. BUT THAT DON'T MEAN I WON'T.

I'VE GOT NO *CHOICE*, UNDERSTAND?

BANK ROBBING WAS THE ONLY THING IN MY *LOSER* LIFE THAT I WAS EVER SEMI-GOOD AT. SO IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...

WRONG. YOU WERE APPARENTLY PRETTY DARN GOOD AT SOMETHING ELSE...

THOSE GLOVES. YOU BUILT THOSE, RIGHT?

WHAT? YEAH...SO WHAT IF I DID?

HOW MANY PEOPLE DO YOU THINK COULD BUILD THOSE? NOT TOO MANY.

YOU KNOW, YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT ABOUT THAT, PAL. BUT HERE'S SOMETHING ELSE I GOT GOING FOR ME THAT THOSE OTHER FOLKS DON'T...

A NICE BIG FAT *ARREST RECORD.*

AND IN THE *REAL WORLD*, WHERE I LIVE, PEOPLE LIKE ME WHO MAKE ONE BAD CHOICE IN THEIR LIVES, *NEVER* GET A SHOT TO CORRECT IT.

THAT SO?

I DON'T GET IT. WHAT'S THE GAG?

NO GAG. THIS IS HORIZON LABS, WHERE I WORK. WE COULD SOMETIMES USE AN EXTRA HAND, THAT'S ALL.

PETER PARKER

HORIZON LABS

LOOK, I'LL BE HONEST, IT'LL PROBABLY BE JUST GETTING COFFEE SOMETIMES.

BUT SOMETIMES IT'LL ALSO BE REAL *LAB* WORK.

WHY... WOULD YOU DO THIS?

LANE AHEAD

JUST BEING NICE.

NOBODY'S THAT NICE.

OKAY, SO MAYBE IT'S ALSO BECAUSE I'M A GUY WHO KNOWS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO NEED A BREAK SOMETIMES.

BUT DON'T GET ME WRONG... THERE'S NO SECOND CHANCES WITH THIS. IF THERE'S SO MUCH AS AN *ASPIRIN* MISSING, YOU'RE GONE.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY...

SAY YOU'LL DO SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR WARDROBE, FOR CRYING OUT LOUD. IT'S NOT LIKE WE HAVE A DRESS CODE THERE OR ANYTHING, BUT *COME ON...*

LOOK, YOU'VE SAID YOU WANTED A SHOT TO CORRECT YOUR PAST MISTAKES, RIGHT?

WELL, HERE IT IS.

THANK YOU.

GIVE ME A CALL NEXT WEEK AND WE'LL LOOK TO GET YOU SET UP.

AND BUY A SUIT!

YOU KNOW... THE GUY I *THOUGHT* YOU WERE, *HE* WOULDN'T HAVE DONE SOMETHING LIKE THIS.

HE PUTS GUYS LIKE ME IN THE JOINT. DON'T CARE MUCH WHAT HAPPENS TO THEM WHEN THEY GET OUT.

ANYWAY, THANKS AGAIN.

HMN.

ACTUALLY, MY FRIEND...

DAILY BUGLE

Magnetic Man Says Goodbye to Iron Bars

Small time crook released on good behavior

HONEY, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE THIS. I GOT A *JOB!*

I SHOULD BE THE ONE THANKING *YOU.* FOR MAKING THE CHOICE YOU MADE.

AND NOT FORCING ME TO MAKE ONE I DIDN'T WANT TO.

The End

the AMAZING SPIDER-MAIL

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You made it! Good news, Spidey-ologists! You're just in time for the debut of an all-new exclusive feature I'm calling "Hey I'm Reading Spidey Comics at Work!" In HIRSCAW we celebrate you folks out there with interesting—or at least tolerable–jobs who manage to find time to squeak out a Spidey read while working.

A few weeks back, I sent the word out on Twitter that we were looking for nominees and within minutes we received entries from many people who clearly feel far too comfortable at work. (I know if I saw Ellie taking pictures of herself reading a comic at work, I'd throw her right outtta here! Let her go work for Jeanine Schaefer down in the X-Office. That's all she does all day!)*

So for the debut of HIRSCAW we meet a man with a job a wish I had! A man who gets to follow the legendary (and --most importantly --NY Mets defeating) St. Louis Cardinals around all day.

Spidey fans, say hello to Derrick Goold, Cardinals beat writer for the iconic *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and lifelong Marvel fan.

Here he is in the final day of spring training reading ASM #655 and-- from what I can make out-- about to get smashed in the head by a Yadier Molina foul ball.

Congrats, pal! I hope you recover enough from the hit on the noggin you're about to get to be able to read this.

If you think you have a cool enough job to be able meet the high level of standard Derrick has set, go ahead and email a picture of yourself (marked OKAY TO PRINT) to the Spidey Office address elsewhere on page!

The next person to say "HIRSCAW" could be you!**

***We call that kind of gag: "The Joke That Was Serious."**

****Not you, Jeanine.**

And now your letters!

Dear Marvel,

Why did you put Spider-Man on the Fantastic Four? Spider-Man was his own man and he needs to stay in his own movie(s).

Thanks!

Freddie Masek

P.S. My language/literature teacher is wanting this answer too...

P.P.S. Are they making a movie where all the superheroes are coming together

The idea for Spidey to take the Human Torch's place in the FF came out of several conversations between creative whizbangs Dan Slott and FF writer Jonathan Hickman. It makes sense given the history of both books and all the characters. (Spidey first tried to join the FF waaaay back in ASM #1).

With Johnny dead, the team needs someone to lighten the mood at the very least and no other hero does that better than Spidey (other than maybe Oscar Wilde who I think is due to appear in Jonathan's *S.H.I.E.L.D.* series).

If you haven't checked out the new FF book yet, you're still early on and there's plenty of time catch up. There's big stuff happening there that'll affect both FF and ASM.

Dear Spidey Editors,

Love. It makes us do some crazy stuff. Though I bet I'm probably the first guy to use love as an excuse for irritably confronting Dan Slott at a Comic-Con. I guess I was just upset. You see, I was happy with the way things were before *Big Time*. I thought the tone of *Brand New Day* was perfectly suited to the most interesting aspects of Spider-Man's character. Shifting to the present, I think that *Big Time* undermines all the hard work of the last two years. Maybe even the last 48 years. I mean, why is Peter so happy now? I thought all writers (and even some veterinarians) knew that complication is the single most essential element in good storytelling. So where's the sense in removing problems from the main character's life?

So when I heard Slott would be in Sydney for a signing session, I armed myself with a copy of issue #654 and as many derogatory adjectives for his work as I could think of. I didn't want to get caught bringing a knife to gun fight, so I prepared some witty comebacks for what I imagined would be Dan's hostile retorts. As it turned out, I brought a gun to a flower throwing contest and got totally owned. Dan didn't respond with hostility because, apparently, he's the nicest human being on the face of the Earth. This totally threw me off my game plan. We ended up talking mostly about dialogue, and how since BT the new tone of the title has resulted in some implausible exposition.

To the dismay of the growing line behind me, we talked for what must have been 10 minutes and I think we both made some good points. Long story short, we ended up sharing a hug.

Anyway, I just wanted Dan to better understand why I did what I did. The weird thing is that I do love his work, and throughout BND, his was the name I most looked forward to seeing on the cover. I guess I love Spider-Man too much. I also wanted him to know that I appreciate how dignified he was with me. I told Dan that I would be dropping the book; however as I later told him in a figurative mess of tears, I'll be sticking with it while waiting for the next shift. Please see that my sentiments are passed on to the man.

Michael Toumazou
Sydney, Australia

Nice of you to write, Michael. There are few people on the planet who understand Spidey better than Dan Slott and believe me he has no interest in making Pete's life too easy.

Dear Spidey,

I just want to thank you all. I'm 24 years old and I have been reading Spider-Man comics since I was little. I'm thanking you for three reasons:

One, because you have made the bond between grandfather, father and son amazing.

Two, because you got me through the war when I was a Marine.

And lastly, three, because I'm still fighting the battle at home and no matter what, along with my family, Spidey is there to clear my mind. Thank you all.

Cpl. William Leif Jones

And thank you, Corporal, for a great letter to end on. Spidey's got the best most loyal fans in comics and this is evidence of that fact.

On the other hand, it's also got some of the laziest. I mean did you see that picture of Goold above? Spending hours just sitting around watching guys play baseball! And he gets paid for it! What a country!

That's all she wrote for this week. We'll see you next time for an all-new chapter of "Infested," the return of Anti-Venom, the debut of penciler Giuseppe Camuncoli on ASM and the return of someone deeply connected to Spidey's past.

Get ready for "The Ghost Of Jean DeWolff"!

(If you don't know who that is...you got some homework to do. Go pick up the new printing of "Spider-Man: The Death of Jean DeWolff"—on sale now! It's one of the best Spidey stories you'll ever read.)

Viva Dini!

Simperin' Steve
4/28/11

NEXT!

ASM #664

ALSO ON SALE THIS WEEK:

VENOM #3

Send e-mail to
SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM
(please mark as OKAY TO PRINT)